

ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING 3, LEAVE YOUR CONCERNS WITH HIM
Philippians 4:4-9, 4:11-13 / John 14:27 / Psalm 139:16
2025-06-08

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Don't be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in/through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Today we're into the third message of our series, *Anxious for Nothing*. None of us is exempt from anxiety; yet it is not something we must wrestle with on our own. But how do we deal with it? Well, from Paul's instruction, he tells us to do four things:
Celebrate God's goodness: Rejoice in the Lord always (verse 4) That was the first message.
Ask God for help: Let your requests be made known to God (verse 6) That was last week's message.
Leave your concerns with Him: With thanksgiving (v. 6) That's today's message.
Meditate on good things: Think about things that are excellent and praiseworthy (verse 8) Our wrap up.

Celebrate. Ask. Leave. Meditate. C.A.L.M. God is ready to give you comfort. With God as your helper, you'll reframe the way you face your fears, discover a life characterized by calm and develop ways of facing anxiety. It's not God's will that you lead a life of perpetual anxiety. Lord, You spoke to storms. Would you speak to ours? You calmed the hearts of the apostles. Would You calm the chaos within us? We're weary from our worry, battered by life's gales. Prince of Peace, give us a spirit of calm, Quench anxiety. Let us know less fret and more faith.

We have "a God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." Rejoice that He's able to do what you can't do. God's in control and He's good. Let the storms blow.

The more people try to control the world, the more they realize they can't. Instead of seeking control, relinquish it. You can't run the world but you can entrust it to God. Peace is available, not because of a lack of problems, but because we have a sovereign Lord. Rather than choose the world's chaos, rejoice in the Lord's sovereignty. Absolutely everything is under His control; we need not be anxious over what He already has figured out for our good. You can't be full of God and full of fear at the same time. Put yourself entirely in His care. As you do, you'll find it possible to be anxious for nothing. God is personally and powerfully involved in His creation. "The Son sustain(s) all things. Jesus is directing creation toward a desired aim. He won't be deterred. "He is before all things and in Him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17). The ultimate proof of this providence is Christ's death on the cross. Nothing was more evil. But no result was ever greater! God not only knew of the crucifixion, He ordained it. So,

can God not reverse your life pain? We can wear our hurt or wear our hope, clothing ourselves in God's providence.

Last week we focused on "Asking God for help...make your requests known to God. And we spoke about 1) contagious calm and 2) prayer not despair.

So today, Leave Your Concerns with Him...with thanksgiving. Do you have Great Gratitude? Christ-based contentment turns us into strong people. The widest river in the world is not the St. Lawrence or the Mackenzie, it is a body of water called 'If Only'. Are you standing on its shore, casting longing eyes over the water. You want to cross it but you can't find the ferry. You're convinced the 'If Only River' separates you from the good life. If only I were thinner, if only I had more money, if only the kids would come/or were gone, if only I could leave home/move home, get married/divorced...then I would have the good life. Does the good life seem always to be 1 if only away—one purchase, one promotion, one election, one romance away? Anxiety—are you in a hurry to cross the river and worried that you never will? So you take on new projects or responsibilities, long days, short nights and the stress builds.

But Paul says not so. The good life begins not when circumstances change, but when our attitude toward them does. "Don't be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.." Gratitude is a mindful awareness of the benefits of life—the greatest of virtues. Grateful people tend to be more empathetic and forgiving of others, demonstrate less envy, materialism and self-centredness. The list keeps going: gratitude improves self-esteem, enhances relationships, quality of sleep and longevity. If in pill form it would be a miracle cure. So, gratitude takes us off the shore of 'If Only' and lands us in the fertile valley of Already. The grateful heart says, "You've already given me this, that...Thank You, God! How about the hymn, "Count Your Blessings"! As you look at your blessings anxiety and worry vamoose. 1 heartfelt thank you sucks the oxygen right out of worry. Focus more on what you do have and less on what you don't.

I've learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through Him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:11-13).

Remember, Paul wrote this while he was in a miserable jail, with no reason to hope for release. If your happiness depends on what you drive, wear, own, you'll never discover contentment, setting yourself up for anxiety. Contingent contentment turns us into worried/anxious people.

Paul was content with what he had—and he didn't have much—a cell instead of a house, four walls instead of a mission field, chains instead of jewelry, a guard instead of a wife. His list was different. He had eternal life, he had the love of God, he had forgiveness of sins, he had the

assurance of salvation, he had Christ and Christ was enough—far greater than what he didn't have.

“To me the only important thing about living is Christ, and dying would be profit for me (Philippians 1:21).”

His only aim was to know Jesus. Riches didn't attract him, applause didn't matter to him, the grave didn't intimidate him. As a result he was content.

Can death take our joy? No, Jesus is greater than death. Can failure take our joy? No, Jesus is greater than our sin. Can betrayal take our joy? No, Jesus will never leave us. Can sickness take our joy? No, God has promised, whether on this side of the grave or the other, to heal us. Can disappointment take our joy? No, because even though our plans may not work out, we know God's plan will.

Death, failure, betrayal, sickness, disappointment cannot take our joy because they cannot take our Jesus. What you have in Christ is greater than anything you don't have in life. You have God, who is crazy about you and the forces of heaven to monitor and protect you. You have the living presence of Jesus within you. In Christ you have everything. He can give you happiness that can never be taken, grace that will never expire and wisdom that will ever increase. He's a fountain of living hope that will never be exhausted. Anchor your heart to the character of God. Moods will come and go, situations will fluctuate, but you will never be left adrift in despair. Your contentment endures the storm.

God's peace and your peace: though you may be facing the perfect storm, Jesus offers the perfect peace. We generally do pretty well at handling 1 challenge, but when wave after wave comes at us we wonder if we'll survive. But Paul's answer is profound and concise: “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

As we do our part (rejoice in the Lord, pursue a gentle spirit, pray about everything and cling to gratitude), God does His part—bestowing on us the peace of God, resulting in an inexplicable calm. The peace of God transcends all logic and all efforts to explain it. This kind of peace is not a human achievement; it's a gift from God: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid (John 14:27). His peace—that kept His thoughts clear and heart pure as He hung on the cross, can be yours. “It guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). As we pray and celebrate Him, He builds a fortress around our hearts and minds, protecting us from the attacks of the devil...A Mighty Fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. Acts 27 recounts Paul's travels on a Roman ship that was ultimately destroyed in a winter storm of storms on the Mediterranean. But God told Paul everyone would survive. The mariners, who knew how to sail gave up hope. Paul, a Jewish preacher who presumably knew very little about sailing, became the voice of courage. In spite of doing all you can to weather life's storms, let God give you His perfect peace! If you are in a storm of anxiety because you didn't listen to God, receive God's rebuke. Stand corrected, confess your sins and resolve to do better. Learn from your poor choice but don't despair.

Heaven has helpers to help you (There stood by me this night an angel—on the deck of a sinking ship (verse 23). In Daniel 10, Daniel prays and an angel appeared to him twenty-one days later—the angel heard immediately but had been held up in a heavenly battle with the dark kingdom. Do what Daniel did. Remain before the Lord. Isaiah 40:31: Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego in the fire. Peter being escorted out of prison (Acts 12). Angels can walk you out of your bondage.

Heaven has a place for you. When you gave your life to God, He took responsibility for you. He guarantees safe arrival for you into His port. You can have peace in the storm because you are not alone... you belong to God.

You are in the Lord's service. If God has work for you to do, He will keep you alive to do it. All the days planned for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139). Although your troubles are not over, Jesus says, "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart (be brave)! I have overcome the world (John 16:33). Before you go into battle, go first to your Father in prayer and praise (read about Jehoshaphat, 2 Chronicles 20). Confess your fears, gather with His people. Then once God moves, you move too. Expect to see the God of the ages fight for you. Because you belong to Him, you can have peace in the midst of the storm. *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you."* Perfect storm...but perfect peace.